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AN Original

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Nostalgia and Herd Political Behaviour – A Psychopolitical Glance on the Latest Brazilian Electoral Polls

AN Original - UNPOP Series

The intersection of politics, mythology, and mass behaviour has persistently influenced political scenarios worldwide. Recently, studies have explored the intricate relationship between these concepts and populism, (...)

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en Reflection Original Anti-Colonialism

Post-humanism's Impact on Media, Artificial Intelligence Gathering Evidence on Hamas-Israel Conflict AN Original

2024-04-20

By Jacqueline Wilson

Post-humanism is a philosophical perspective that challenges our normative beliefs about what it means to be human. Post-humanism theorists such as Rosi Braidotti in her Posthuman Critical Theory and Donna Haraway in A Cyborg Manifesto argue that the blurred relationship, boundaries and hierarchy between humans, animals and machines are fluid and can be transcended. Both post-humanism theorists argue that human beings are no longer the sole or dominant agents of the world; we now embody technology and nature. Braidotti and Haraway propose problematising humans' privileged status in these networks while marginalising others. The mechanisation war increased during the American Civil War and World War I, but the posthuman military truly emerged during the 1939–45 war. The military development produced the posthuman concept within academia, with its emancipatory potential discussed by Rosi Braidott. Technology enables the militarist project in de-centring the human, such as in the Gaza-Israel conflict. The ongoing war between Hamas and Israel since 7 October 2023 sees the belligerents no longer engaged in fighting traditional wars but in enacting posthuman war militarist projects, which are contra-productive in post-humanist thinking and practice as advancements in technology, genetics and artificial intelligence are transforming the human condition, not reducing human potential.

This article discusses the Gaza-Israel de-territorialised warfare between Hamas and the advanced Israeli militaries. Both parties' atrocities failed liberal humanism, and their violence serves no purpose. Post-humanist artificial intelligence in journalism has been used to compile evidence of various means of artificial intelligence in the context of the Gaza-Israel

situation since 7 October 2023. Posthuman technologies, such as advanced analytics and artificial intelligence, can detect human rights violations more efficiently and accurately. Since the Gaza-Israel war erupted, disinformation about the war has proliferated on various social media platforms, where misrepresented video footage, mistranslations and outright falsehoods often crowd out factual reporting from the conflict. The war shifts between human and non-human entities, ultimately blurring the line between them.

Journalists like Niels de Hoog, Antonio Voce, Elena Morresi, Manisha Ganguly and Ashley Kirk use satellite imagery and open-source evidence to investigate the extent of Israel's damage inflicted on civilian infrastructure during its conflict with Hamas.

This ground-breaking development in journalism reflects how journalists covering news in conflict zones have turned to AI technology to gather evidence and report on the ground realities. For instance, Niels de Hoog, Antonio Voce, Elena Morresi, Manisha Ganguly and Ashley Kirk are the Guardians journalists who have successfully utilised Planet Labs, a satellite imaging company that captures Earth images using a small satellite constellation. The satellite imagery sourced from Planet Labs provided images of the conflict zone in Gaza taken before and after the events of 2023. Specifically, images from May 2023 – months before the current conflict started – were obtained, followed by images from 30 November, 31 December and 5 January 2024 to document the damages caused by the conflict. Satellite imagery was used to verify the accuracy of their findings. Additionally, the investigation employed satellite imagery from Copernicus Sentinel, an EU satellite system capturing data and images of the Earth for climate, land and ocean monitoring, among other purposes, to supplement the analysis in reporting the impact of war in Gaza.

With the rise of misinformation and deep fakes around the Gaza-Israel conflict on social media, images captured using advanced analytics and artificial intelligence provide reliable evidence of the scope of the human catastrophe. This includes accountability for both parties as the images are an unlimited source of evidence, precluding any decisive victory. The images show destroyed orchards, greenhouses, agriculture, schools and flattened landmarks in three places in Gaza that have experienced such damage—Beit Hanoun, al-Zahra and Khan Younis—as well as the current situation six months into the war.

This investigation method helps experts and researchers in using open-source AI like Planet Labs and Bellingcat to research various issues, including geopolitical conflicts and human rights violations. Although Planet Lab and Bellingcat both offer satellite imagery, their purposes and applications differ. Planet Labs mainly creates and sells high-resolution satellite imagery that different organisations, such as media companies, can use for multiple purposes. Contrarily, Bellingcat utilises publicly available satellite imagery and other open-source data to investigate and create reports on human rights violations. Journalists like Niels de Hoog, Antonio Voce, Elena Morresi, Manisha Ganguly, Ashley Kirk and Johanna Wild from Germany use open sources for digital investigation and reporting. Both open-source AI services provide factual and reliable information.

A satellite image captured by Planet Labs on 20 May 2023 confirms the damage caused by Israeli military operations. The image also reveals some visible differences in colour, which can be attributed to seasonal changes in crop growth. On 12 December 2023, after the satellite image was taken, a video depicting Israeli forces detonating a school building managed by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees was released.

The Guardian used satellite imagery on three areas in Gaza; in some specific images, for instance, the damage has been highlighted in yellow in the accompanying imagery. Satellite imagery captures different image types, such as aerial imagery of the warzone and damage assessments, as well as for monitoring humanitarian situations and identifying potential sites for refugee camps due to the extensive use of weapons in Gaza leading to significant fatalities and injuries. Hospitals and health facilities have been damaged, making it difficult for people to access the care they need in the northern Gaza Strip throughout Israel's offence against Hamas in Gaza.

With Open Source Plant Lab, The Guardian gathered and analysed over 200 pieces of evidence, including videos, photos, news footage and satellite imagery from approximately 21 October to 11 November, 2023. As part of their investigation, international humanitarian organisations were contacted by The Guardian to assess the impact of the conflict on 10 hospitals and health centres in Gaza. This involved gathering information and evidence related to the damage incurred by these facilities during the conflict. In terms of evidence gathering, the satellite imagery provided footage, which sheds more light on the pulverising attack in Gaza. Substantial evidence related to the Israeli military's use of airstrikes that caused deaths and injuries among young children who arrived at the hospital with deep wounds and severe burns was revealed. This open-source evidence can be used to help hold the state of Israel accountable for violations of international law or other abuses committed during the conflict, regardless of the Israeli military's claim that the war is directed at Hamas, a terror organisation, rather than the people of Gaza.

Overall, satellite imagery can provide critical information and evidence related to the impact of war in Gaza, which is essential in the work of investigative journalists, human rights organisations, and universities. In conclusion, journalism continuously evolves, and employing advanced technologies and the concept of post-humanism is becoming increasingly important. However, such development is not limited to journalism; open-source technological tools also offer academic research that presents possibilities and challenges for advancing our understanding of the complex and essential issues in the social science trajectory. As humans, we embody technology(ies), and post-humanism and post-media inevitability change human interaction in technology, leading to a global informatisation and computerisation that impacts daily life, the landscape of academia and students, as well as a more comprehensive techno-cultural transformation. The Utrecht University Open Global Justice Lab is a prime example of how post-humanism can enhance academic research in pursuit of global justice. The Cyborg Manifesto by feminist theorist Donna Haraway illustrates the embodiment of humans and technology and the interaction between humans and non-humans, which Haraway defines as cybernetic organisms.

Finally, the integration of advanced technologies and the concept of post-humanism prove to be relevant not just in journalism but also in academic research. Still, as we continue to embrace technological tools, we must not forget that, as humans, we embody technology, and we should work towards a more comprehensive techno-cultural transformation.



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Ação antirracista e o respeito ao entrega(dor): como você recebe seu pedido?

AN Original

2024-04-11

Por Marcos Silva

Quem são as pessoas que em grande maioria estão em trabalhos de entrega? Segundo a reportagem de Lorena Lara, g1 de 13 de abr.2023, o Brasil tinha em 2023 aproximadamente 1,6 milhão de pessoas trabalhando como entregadores ou motoristas de aplicativos no Brasil. A matéria mostra ainda um perfil dos motoristas: a idade média é de 39 anos; 60% deles tem ensino médio completo, 62% são negros; 35% são brancos; 3% são amarelos; 1% é indígena, 95% são homens; 5% são mulheres.

Quando o perfil é dos entregadores localizamos: a idade média de 33 anos; 59% deles têm ensino médio completo; 68% são negros; 29% são brancos; 2% são amarelos; 1% é indígena, 97% são homens; 3% são mulheres. Captamos ainda que 63% deles querem continuar trabalhando com aplicativos. Todavia, temos acompanhado pela mídia, notícias sobre a violência, intolerância e racismo sofrido por estes grupos, em especial de entregadores. Cita-se como exemplos: 1) Corporativismo e racismo no caso do policial que baleou entregador no Rio | Revista Fórum ; 2), Entregador é ameaçado de morte e tem os dentes quebrados após fechada de carro em condomínio de Goiânia ; 3) 'Tenho direito a ter o mesmo que você': entregador negro enfrenta racista em condomínio rico - Ponte Jornalismo"; 4) 'Me chamou de preto favelado e agora ela tenta reverter', diz entregador após ex-atleta o acusar de homofobia, dentre outros casos.



Foto do Autor.

Compreende-se que estes casos não ficam no isolamento. A herança escravista pode explicar a violência contra entregadores. Faz-se necessário refletir sobre as desigualdades sociais e raciais que são atribuídas à herança do passado escravista, à política de branqueamento da passagem do século XIX para o XX, à histórica condescendência das elites brasileiras com desigualdades sociais e ao racismo estrutural e simbólico contemporâneo. As desigualdades raciais no Brasil não são apenas expressivas, mas extremamente persistentes ao longo do tempo e podem ser explicadas por uma concepção de racismo que integra as dimensões estrutural e simbólica na produção e na reprodução das desigualdades raciais no país.

Compreende-se que no plano estrutural, o racismo consiste no sistemático acesso desigual a bens materiais entre os diferentes segmentos raciais. Esta conceituação considera o preconceito interpessoal como apenas uma das possíveis manifestações do racismo. Nesse sentido, enfatiza-se, sobretudo relações sociais e não apenas tendências individuais de pessoas. A presença do racismo, do preconceito e da discriminação racial como práticas sociais, representa obstáculo à redução das desigualdades raciais, obstáculo que só pode ser vencido com a mobilização de esforços de cunho específico.

A sua vez, o conceito de racismo institucional permite uma melhor percepção acerca dos mecanismos de produção e reprodução das desigualdades raciais, inclusive no que tange às políticas públicas. Sua utilização amplia as possibilidades de compreensão sobre o tratamento desigual, assim como permite identificar um novo terreno de enfrentamento das

iniquidades no acesso e no atendimento de diferentes grupos raciais dentro das políticas públicas, abrindo novas frentes de combate ao preconceito e à discriminação, assim como novos instrumentos de promoção de equidade. Sua abordagem possibilita que se identifique o racismo não apenas nas relações do cotidiano, mas pelas desvantagens que causa a determinados grupos (negros, povos indígenas, imigrantes), entre outros.

O racismo institucional sempre coloca pessoas de grupos raciais ou étnicos discriminados em situação de desvantagem no acesso a benefícios gerados pelo Estado e por demais instituições e organizações. Jurema Werneck conceituou racismo institucional como um modo de subordinar o direito e a democracia às necessidades do racismo, fazendo com que os primeiros inexistam ou existam de forma precária, diante de barreiras interpostas na vivência dos grupos e indivíduos aprisionados pelos esquemas de subordinação desse último. Seu impacto na vida da população negra no Brasil pode ser percebido tanto na sua relação direta com os serviços e as instituições que deveriam garantir seus direitos fundamentais.

Na sociedade brasileira, o racismo se define por múltiplos rostos, que abrangem desde uma feição estrutural, institucional, até as microrrelações, como discutiu João Clemente de Souza Neto e Marcos Silva. Historicamente, os movimentos sociais comprometidos com os direitos humanos, principalmente o Movimento Negro brasileiro, sempre lutaram para modificar essa situação. As Leis n.º 10.639/03 e 11.645/08 (ensino da História e Cultura Afro-brasileira e Indígena) - Políticas Públicas Educacionais voltadas para a população negra, e de povos indígenas, são derivadas dessas lutas. Acredita-se que o desafio que enfrentamos é tensionar o campo educacional a repensar seu currículo e epistemologias e quebrar o silêncio da História de populações racializadas.

Por um lado, ressaltamos a importância de influenciadores negros, movimento sociais negros e de pessoas engajadas a luta antirracista que informam e combatem o racismo na mídia e outras ações. O combate ao racismo ganhou força na internet e nas redes sociais com a denúncia dos casos, informações e organizações de movimentos para discutir o tema. E de empresas de aplicativos (nossa foco de atenção) que tem divulgado notas na imprensa visando travar o racismo contra seus entregadores. Isto é, enfatizando que esperam atitudes respeitosas por parte de seus clientes e colaboradores. Ou seja, estes não devem praticar atos discriminatórios, preconceituosos, racistas, homofóbicos, machistas, entre outras ações de intolerâncias, como pudemos observar em uma nota de empresa de aplicativo relacionada a entregas.

Por outro lado, enfatizamos a relevância de uma Educação Antirracista por meio de estratégias organizacionais, institucionais, educacionais, sociedade civil, movimentos sociais de base de combate ao racismo para eliminar formas de discriminação e opressão que atingem populações racializadas (negras, indígenas), entre outros grupos, e que se reproduzem nos mais diversos setores das sociedades contemporâneas: economia, educação, comércio, relações do dia-a-dia, evidenciando temas relacionados a raça, classe, racismo, discriminação, poder, privilégio, discriminação, justiça, direitos humanos. É fundamental a promoção de ações antirracistas no espaço educacional e nas empresas e organizações com vistas à práticas pedagógicas que estabeleçam ações que valorizem a história e cultura de africanos, afrodescendentes, dos povos indígenas, combatendo o racismo.

Ressalta-se que a sociedade brasileira consta com várias legislações de combate ao racismo, dentre outras, as Leis n.º 10.639/2003, supracitada neste texto, entretanto, o Estudo realizado com 1.187 Secretarias Municipais de Educação, o que equivale a 21% das redes municipais de ensino do país, revela que a maioria delas (71%) realiza pouca ou nenhuma ação para a efetividade da Lei que há 20 anos obriga o ensino de história e cultura africana e afro-brasileira nas escolas.

Compreendemos que é urgente reforçar o compromisso coletivo entre a sociedade civil e representantes do poder público para o cumprimento e fortalecimento da Lei 10.639/2003 na prática e para que possamos garantir condições para sua realização também como enfrentamento do racismo na área da educação. Assim frisamos a importância do monitoramento de indicadores que deem visibilidade à dinâmica das desigualdades raciais visando travar quaisquer formas de discriminação e racismo. Vale lembrar que a sociedade brasileira, por meio de suas instituições, tem ferramentas capazes para cumprir as Leis, dentre outras, a Lei n.º 14532/2023; Lei n.º 7716/1989.

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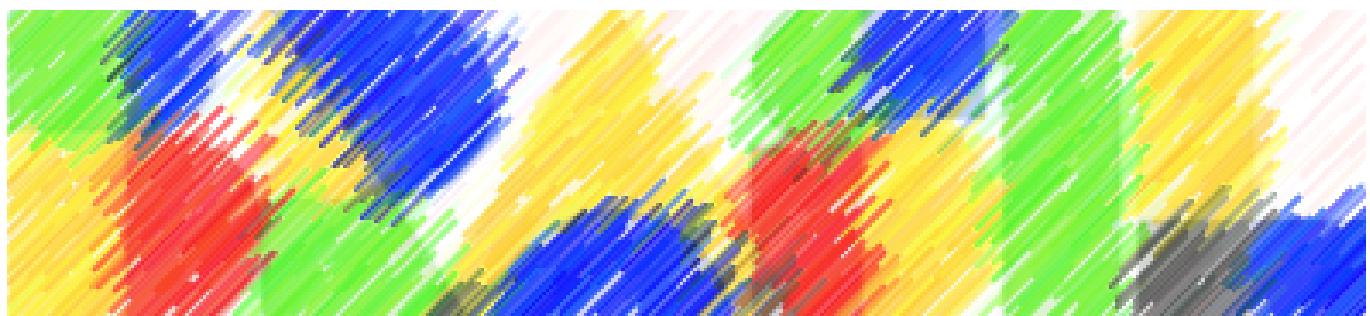
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Nostalgia and Herd Political Behaviour – A Psychopolitical Glance on the Latest Brazilian Electoral Polls AN Original - UNPOP Series

2024-03-30

By Gabrielle Lacerda, Lara Bonassoli, Maria Izabel Braga Weber

The intersection of politics, mythology, and mass behaviour has persistently influenced political scenarios worldwide. Recently, studies have explored the intricate relationship between these concepts and populism, highlighting how the construction of the political narrative influences electoral dynamics in a populist context. By analysing the last two Brazilian election processes (2018 and 2022), this article aims to revisit the concept of herd behaviour to understand how dangerous some populist discourses can be to democracy and how democracy can resist them.



Trying "to define populism" has raised a long and unfinished discussion until now, and consensus is far from reached. However, different approaches have recently gained some adherence regarding populism's essence and effect. Some scholars argue beyond the dichotomy of ideational and substantive aspects of the concept, bringing them closer by understanding it as a not-empty ideational strategy. According to them, populist politicians

use a robust mythological apparatus to create narratives, allowing voters to understand their messages easily and subsidising them in challenging the mainstream parties' positional convergences that do not reflect their preferences (latent or motivated).

These approaches challenge the classical political science definitions of populist leaders as charismatic politicians, voters as a mere amorphous group of followers, and the pluralistic partisan liberal democratic process of representation as a preventive tool to an exclusionary form of populism. The essence of political mythology differs from the common narrative by creating significance for a shared political experience more than trying to convince by its contents. In this sense, the analysis of political mythology narratives should seek beyond the logic that sustains the hierarchical relation of saviour, messianic and chosen figures (although these examples can still be observed), which leads to an authoritarian political context since the political choice of exclusionary populist forces is being normalised everywhere, even in long-stabilised democracies.

This capacity to create significance from shared political experiences reshapes individuals and collective beliefs. It influences public opinion dynamics and political participation, which are dimensions of mass political behaviour that, from a political, psychological perspective, involve social psychological theories of attitudes, emotion, social cognition, and social identity applied to enhance our comprehension of political choice, action, and engagement.

One of these theories is based on an inherent human instinct of defence, as seen in a scaping herd. This analogy has been used to psychologically explain some aspects of mass behaviour in social, political, and economic contexts since the middle of the last century. According to this theory, individuals' thoughts or behaviours within a group are aligned by some trigger. Usually, this happens through local interactions among individuals rather than an authority or leader.

This behaviour and its effect occur due to various causes, mainly emotional contagion or imitation. Sometimes, it happens under conformity reactions to social norms to avoid embarrassment or reprimand of the group, even if it contradicts its own opinion. Nevertheless, what enhances its effect is the human mind's natural inclination to process and be swayed by narratives or tales, which are sequences of events with inherent logic and dynamics. Stories, particularly those shared within a group, influence how we collectively see, understand, emotionally respond to, and deal with shared events.

The concept of the collective soul aims to explain how collective consciousness within a group overrides individual consciousness. Using the last events in Brazil's political scenario in January 2023 as an example of the mentioned imitation, some authors claim that crowd behaviour needs to be reinterpreted to overcome the classical perspective of an antagonistic relationship between crowds and individuals.

Observing Brazil's last two electoral processes, namely in 2018 and 2022, its version of the Capitol assault, provides a clue that despite the extreme political polarisation presented and opposed results from one election to another, Brazilian democracy seems less unstable than its results. There is a lack of consensus in the literature on the effectiveness of the Brazilian political system. There has been a clear pattern of bipolarization at the presidential level since the '90s. From 1994 until 2016, two main political parties – the Workers Party (PT) and the Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB) competed in presidential elections. However,

after the 2014 election process, its context was exacerbated. In the 2018 election, this scenario changed – an old and regular politician from an unknown and minor political party unexpectedly defeated them. The established election system could not prevent a significant shift in the Brazilian party structure starting in 2018, with the traditional right-wing party (PSDB) being supplanted by an extreme-right movement known as Bolsonarism.

The strategic use of political mythology by this populist movement in the 2018 election intertwined the messianic and religious background fed by a narrative of unfounded nostalgia for the military Brazilian dictatorship past, "...the myth of a past that never or no longer exists...". This context was addressed by different authors who highlighted the significance of a collective memory shared by voters who either were not born in this past or were too young to preserve that memory. For the elderly, instead, bringing this past to a present was associated with an unrealistic threat to their beliefs that they did not link to mainstream political parties' positions, filling in a classic recipe for herd behaviour for a wide range of Brazilian voters seeking changes.

However, being a populist force in charge led this movement to face the challenges of political opinion. After the COVID-19 pandemic's dramatic results, most of the population wanted even more political and economic changes in government. As was pointed out by some specialists, every election, by definition, has only one government candidate and several opposition candidates' options. Dysfunctional distrust increases the polarisation of political behaviour and leads to opposite sides. When the majority wants to change, voters look at the possibilities they may know, which occurs in the Brazilian 2022 political poll.

In this last election, persistent polarisation, violence, disinformation narratives, conspiracy theories, hate speech, misinformation and fake news were identified at an unprecedented level, raising and spreading distrust feelings in society. At that time, news remarks the country's tightest election since democratisation (1985). For the first time after its institution, a sitting president did not succeed in being re-elected. In addition, for the first time, a politician was elected for a third round for presidential charge. However, none of the presidential and governor's winners exceeded 50% of the votes, and the turnout was the highest in Brazilian electoral history. Despite advances, the effect was a spread of distrust in the electoral system and institutions that remain after the electoral process. This entanglement of elements influences the political information available to prevent and minimise the effects of herd behaviour.

The Brazilian case illustrates how electoral choices often transcend individual considerations, demonstrating the complexity of social and political dynamics during elective processes. In this context, it is possible to note the relevance of the effect of herd behaviour. In Brazil, we observe how this Phenomenon is being fuelled in society, often through polarising speeches and the dissemination of fake news, compromising critical analysis on the part of citizens. This herd behaviour can harm society and democracy, undermining the diversity of opinions and hindering constructive dialogue. Furthermore, perpetuating falsehoods and distortions compromises the integrity of the democratic process. Identifying the mechanisms that promote and confront the herd effect is necessary to avoid negative consequences, such as institutional destabilisation and the erosion of democratic values. Therefore, understanding and facing it is essential to preserve the health of democracy and to ensure a more informed and responsible political environment.



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